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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 USNATO 000103

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [EAPC](#)

SUBJECT: EAPC DISCUSSES KOSOVO, PARTNERSHIP ON FEBRUARY 14

REF: A. STATE 18717

[1](#)B. USNATO-EUR/RPM E-MAIL EAPC(PC)N(2007)0001

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (SBU) The U.S. and UK responded forcefully to Serbian and Russian objections to UN Envoy Ahtisaari's formula for Kosovo's final status at the February 14 Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) session. Ambassadors discussed the outcomes of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) Planning Symposium held in Oberammergau January 17-19 and endorsed a period of experimentation with the Global Partnership concepts. Partners' lively participation demonstrated their eagerness to consult and operate more closely with the Alliance. End Summary.

SERBIA, RUSSIA TAKE AIM AT AHTISAARI

[1](#)2. (SBU) Serbian Ambassador Milinkovic followed Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer's regular opening briefing on political and security issues (in this case, a rundown of recent ministerials on Afghanistan and Kosovo) by objecting to UN Special Envoy Ahtisaari's proposal for the final status of Kosovo. He stated that Belgrade did not share Allies' positive appraisal of the Ahtisaari proposal, claiming that it would infringe on the rights and prerogatives of a sovereign state and violate Serbia's territorial integrity) principles that, he stressed, are upheld in the PfP Framework Document. He argued further that the Kosovo settlement would be used as a precedent for other separatist regions, "whatever one may say to the contrary." Russian DCM Soltanovskiy seconded the point about precedents, noting that Russian Defense Minister Ivanov had objected to Ahtisaari's proposal at NATO's Defense Ministerial in Seville the week before.

[1](#)3. (SBU) SYG de Hoop Scheffer did not address the substance of the Serbian/Russian complaints, but acknowledged their prerogative to raise sensitive security issues in the EAPC. UK Ambassador Eldon and U.S. DCM Olson responded more strongly, pointing out that any further delay in settling Kosovo's status would only breed instability, enumerating the ways that Kosovo was unique, and noting the strong support that Allies had given to Ahtisaari proposals at NATO ministerials. (NOTE: The DCM previewed elements of Department guidance for Ahtisaari's February 16 meeting with the North Atlantic Council (NAC - REF A). While Milinkovic's flagging of the PfP Framework Document could signal divisive debates ahead, hearing him out could also serve to increase

Serbia's buy-in to Partnership. The PfP Framework Document does not obligate Allies to accept a Partner's request for security consultations. END NOTE)

SUPPORT FOR EXPERIMENTING WITH PARTNERSHIP...

¶4. (SBU) Turning to the main agenda item, EAPC Ambassadors discussed the outcomes of the PfP Planning Symposium held in Oberammergau January 17-19. The SYG noted that the Riga decision to extend Partnership tools to Mediterranean Dialogue (MD), Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), and interested Contact Countries (CCs) was clear. He noted that Japan had played an active role at the Symposium. Further debate focused on Symposium Chairman Assistant Secretary General Martin Erdman's recommendations (REF B). These included taking on a period of experimentation with the new partnership concepts agreed at the Riga Summit -- flexible-format "26 n" meetings, invitations to selected Partners to some NAC deliberations, and giving the EAPC Political Council more authority for setting out in advance EAPC Ambassadors' agendas. Erdman's recommendations also supported the desire of Non-NATO Troop Contributors (NNTCs) to have a greater role in operational decision shaping, stating "shared risk implies the enhanced inclusion of Partners in the relevant structures and procedures."

¶5. (SBU) German PermRep Duckwitz, Swedish Ambassador Anderman, Netherlands PermRep Schaper, and Romanian PermRep Ducaru referred to their presentations at the Symposium to address Erdman's recommendations. Duckwitz sought to contain NATO's engagement with non-Allies by stressing that it should be demand-driven, individually tailored, and not add to NATO's busy meeting schedule. Anderman, like subsequent NNTC

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speakers, applauded the line that "shared risk implies enhanced inclusion," and called for more regular NAC-NNTC consultations) like Ahtisaari's February 16 meeting with the NAC. On the practical side, he suggested that information-sharing in the field should be done through existing secure mission-specific local area networks rather than Allied-only channels. Ducaru endorsed Erdman's call for a period of experimentation and suggested a useful list of potential 26 n discussion topics) security sector reform, energy security, post-conflict stabilization operations, arms control, and public diplomacy) that would be of interest to some, but not all, of NATO's partners. Schaper's intervention was a helpful endorsement of moving smartly ahead on the Riga partnership agenda on all fronts, not only those identified by Erdman.

... AND EXPANDING IT

¶6. (SBU) French Ambassador Duque broke with his usual critical stance on Riga partnership decisions to state that Allied engagement with Partners, MD and ICI participants, and certain CCs was proving beneficial. Like many others, he supported Erdman's recommendation to lengthen the PfP Planning Symposium and break it loose from the Defense Planning Symposium that has immediately preceded it. He said the Oberammergau proposal to allow for "x n" meetings) subgroups of interested Allies and Partners) was "inconceivable." Swedish Ambassador Anderman took the floor to assure Duque that his advocacy of "x n" did not imply that any Ally should be excluded, but that they could opt out. (NOTE: Duque's objection to the "x n" reference reflected sensitivity to being isolated within the Alliance. In fact, NATO's informal SEEGROUP and Adriatic Charter meetings provide precedents for such subgroups, although generalizing this as "x n" formats is new.) Serbia's intervention on Global Partnership, like that of most Partners, was quite positive. Norway was the only nation to oppose an experimentation phase with new consultative formats, but supported closer engagement of NNTCs in general. Chairman of the Military Committee Henault supported expansion of Partnership tools with military relevance and greater

mil-to-mil cooperation with partners.

COMMENT: THE KEY TO ENGAGEMENT

¶7. (SBU) Croatia, Switzerland, Georgia, Austria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Finland, Ukraine, Ireland, Moldova, and Serbia added their voices to support for NATO,s Global Partnership.

The uncharacteristically lively discussion and substantive engagement of so many Partner representatives) all but Serbia NNTCs) demonstrated again their eagerness to be fuller partners in NATO consultations and operations. Global Partnership,s more inclusive, self-differentiating outreach to security providers world-wide is intended to tap into that eagerness and build like-minded, interoperable forces for Alliance-led operations. End Comment

¶8. (U) The next EAPC Ambassadors' meeting is scheduled for March 14.

OLSON